

# FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONAL MODULE 12

FACILITATOR GUIDE

FIM 12

GROUP  
COMMUNICATION  
LEARNING  
CIRCLES



AANP  
2007



**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify a new strategy for improving group communication

**INTRODUCTION:**

This module introduces a group communication technique called a learning circle. The Learning Circle truly reflects the process by which individuals learn. We observe through our senses, we interpret what we observe, we have feelings, and we think through our intentions before taking action. This happens with all of us everyday, all the time, from the day we are born until the day we die. The Learning Circle allows us to share and explore any and all of these elements - observations, interpretations, and feelings intentions. As a result of the process of the circle, we individually can broaden our learning - by considering other's facts (observations); modifying our interpretations, feeling new feelings (via empathy), and shaping new intentions. A learning circle also offers a safe place for individuals to share and be heard. It creates an opportunity for quiet, reserved speakers to share alongside their more vocal counterparts.

**NOTE:**

Prior to the session, set up the chairs in a u-shape without any tables or other barriers in the middle. When you have concluded the PowerPoint portion of the session, place a chair in the open part of the “U” and fill in the circle.

**TIME:**

5 minutes for the title page welcome and review of the session goals

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Warmly welcome participants to the session, and say the title.

**NOTES:**

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FIM 12: GROUP COMMUNICATION LEARNING CIRCLES

LEARNING TECHNIQUES

This module generates discussion around the topic of learning circles and effective communication strategies. Both large and small group discussion is incorporated into the session.

OUTLINE

This module is 60 minutes. It is divided into four parts:

- Group warm-up activity
- Purpose and rule of a learning circle
- Practice of a learning circle
- Wrap up and post test

SUPPLIES:

Flip chart and markers

LCD projector and computer

Screen or wall space

PowerPoint slides

Good Communication cards

“Learning Circle” handout

*The Real Meaning of Peace* story

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the session goals with the participants. Answer any questions they may have at this time.

NOTES:

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### Session Goals

- To learn the importance of good communication
- To understand the perspectives and opinions of others
- To learn a new strategy for improved group communication

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**NOTE:**

This module begins with a group warm-up. A group warm-up is like an icebreaker. It is an opportunity for participants to get to know each other, get comfortable sharing with one another, and to get acquainted with active participation in the session. The Weather Forecast group warm-up activity is an opportunity for people to safely share how they are feeling in a safe way.

**TIME:**

5 minutes


**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Explain that a group warm-up, like an icebreaker, is an opportunity to get to know each other. Instruct participants to consider how they are feeling right now. They can think about their mood, how they feel about work, etc.

Ask them to relate those feelings to a weather forecast. Give some examples. Sunny skies indicates things are going great. Thunderstorms may indicate a person is feeling anxious or overwhelmed. See the next slide for some examples of types of weather.

Ask for a volunteer to begin sharing his/her forecast. Continue around the circle until everyone has had the opportunity to share their forecast.

### Weather Forecast




- Take a minute to consider how you are feeling right now. What is your mood? How do you feel about work?
- Relate that feeling to a weather forecast – cloudy, sunny and hot, ice storm, etc.
- Share your weather forecast with the entire group.

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### How's the weather?



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**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Examples of types of weather. After everyone has shared their weather forecasts, discuss with the group the differences and similarities. If many were related to the work environment, it may be interesting to note that even though people work at the same organization, they experience things differently and have different perceptions regarding what is really going on.

**NOTES:**

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### Good Communication



- In teams, discuss what “good communication” means to you.
- Brainstorm for five minutes.
- Write your responses on a flip chart.
- Report back to the entire group.

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### TIME:

10 minutes including slides 5 – 6

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Prior to the session, print the “Good Communication” cards and have one card ready for each team. Divide the participants into four groups. Give each group a flip chart and marker. Review the instructions listed on the slide. Give each group a “Good Communication” card to add to the discussion. Each card contains a different variable to consider when discussing good communication. The variables are:

Think about **communication in general**, what makes it good? What do you need to feel like you have the information you need as well as being a part of the discussion and decision making?

Think from the perspective of a **shy, reserved worker** who is hesitant to speak up in a crowd but has good insights and opinions.

Think from the perspective of the **formal leader** who is accustomed to sharing his/her ideas but doesn’t often get to hear the ideas of others.

Think from the perspective of the **loud, opinionated person** who freely shares opinions but doesn’t often hear what others have to say.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Give the groups five minutes to complete their list. When the groups report back, invite each group to first share their added variable and then discuss their brainstormed ideas.

Looking at the four lists, circle the similarities/common themes you see. Ask the participants to assist you. Ask the group to summarize the communication needs of the different individuals and to think of a way to meet all of those needs. Segue into a discussion of a group communication technique called a Learning Circle.

### Group Discussion



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## FIM 12: GROUP COMMUNICATION LEARNING CIRCLES

## Learning Circle

### Purpose of a learning circle:

- Allows each person to have a voice
- Helps the “talkers” to listen and the quiet ones to speak
- Levels the field: no one’s opinion matters more than another’s
- Creates an atmosphere of trust and care
- Provides a constructive forum for sharing and problem solving

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## TIME:

5 minutes to explain the purpose and rules of a learning circle, slides 7 - 10

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Briefly review each of the bullet points listed and ask for questions after you have reviewed the purpose and rules. Real learning will take place by experiencing a learning circle. Ask the group if anyone has participated in a learning circle, and, if so, what the experience was like.

## NOTES:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FIM 12: GROUP COMMUNICATION LEARNING CIRCLES

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the rules of a learning circle with the participants.

#### Learning Circle

##### Rules:

- Participants are to sit in a circle.
- There are to be no barriers between the participants (e.g., a conference table or desk).
- One person functions as the facilitator and poses a question.
- A volunteer begins the circle by responding to the question.

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#### Learning Circle

##### Rules:

- Each person shares, one after another, starting from the volunteer.
- There is no cross talk – no one responds verbally to anything heard until it is their turn to speak.
- An individual may pass and the facilitator will return to them once everyone has had the opportunity to share.

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### INSTRUCTIONS:

Continue reviewing the rules of a learning circle.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Continue sharing the rules of a learning circle.

#### Learning Circle

##### Rules:

- After everyone has shared, the facilitator opens the circle for cross talk (general discussion).
- Discussion continues until an agreed upon time or when the issue has been satisfactorily discussed.

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#### The Real Meaning of Peace



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### TIME:

5 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Read the story, The Real Meaning of Peace. This story was found at [www.inspirationpeak.com](http://www.inspirationpeak.com), but the author is unknown.

## FIM 12: GROUP COMMUNICATION LEARNING CIRCLES

### Learning Circle

#### Question:

1. What is one thing you can personally do to find that peace within yourself?
2. How can we create a more peaceful, more caring environment here?

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#### TIME:

20 minutes

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Conduct a learning circle. Make sure you are seated in a circle without barriers. Ask the first question.

What is one thing you can personally do to find that peace within yourself?

Ask question 2 as a follow up.

How can we create a more peaceful, more caring environment here?

#### TIME:

5 minutes including slides 13 - 14

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Ask the participants what they think learning circles have to do with abuse and neglect prevention. Invite a couple of responses. Explain that abuse and neglect prevention begins with a focus on person-centered care and relationships. Perhaps one of the best ways to develop relationships is with an organizational commitment to regular learning circles. Ask participants how we might use learning circles in our organization. Ask participants if they would be willing to commit to regular participation in learning circles.

### So What?



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### Learning Circles

- Wrap up



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#### INSTRUCTIONS:

As a wrap up to the session, review the concept of learning circles and the important role they play in creating and maintaining a caring environment.

Ask participants to go around the room offering one thing they will take away from this program that will help them prevent abuse and neglect.

Thank them for actively participating in the activities of the session.





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## NOTES

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